

E S P R I T C O N T E M P O R A I N

Concert of Contemporary Music for Orchestra

Wednesday, September 26, 1984 8:00 pm

Premiere Dance Theatre

International Society for Contemporary Music - World Music Days

Esprit Contemporain - Alex Pauk, Musical Director

PROGRAM

*VANISHING POINTS (1983)

JOHN REA (Canada)

***RITRATTO (1979-83)

MAGNUS LINDBERG (Finland)

*INTO THE DISTANT STILLNESS ... (1984)
(World Premiere)

BRIAN CHERNEY (Canada)

INTERMISSION

*ALCHEMIES (1983)

JOHN BURKE (Canada)

**MIRAGE (1984)
(World Premiere)

ALEX PAUK (Canada)

*Commissioned by the National Youth Orchestra of Canada with the assistance of The Canada Council.

**Commissioned by the National Youth Orchestra of Canada with the assistance of the Ontario Arts Council.

***Work selected by the ISCM international jury.

ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN

In keeping with a policy of benefiting the cultural heritage of Canada, Suncor Inc. proudly continues its sponsorship of ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN, a new orchestra devoted to the performance of recent Canadian music.

This unique venture provides an important opportunity for the country's young composers to receive much needed exposure of their work. It has as its focal point, the creation of a new repertoire which is accessible to the majority of orchestras in Canada.

The ensemble, conducted by Alex Pauk, is made up of highly skilled young professional musicians with a special interest in further familiarizing themselves with the sounds and techniques of Canada's newest repertoire.

In addition to the corporate sponsorship of Suncor Inc., this project is assisted through the kind support of The Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council and the Canadian Section, ISCM. The commissions for this programme were initiated by the National Youth Orchestra of Canada which is also responsible for concert production.

Special thanks go to the Laidlaw Foundation for supporting the production of Mirage by Alex Pauk, SNC/FW Ltd. for supporting the production of John Rea's Vanishing Points, Saint Paul's Anglican Church and Hart House, University of Toronto.

The grand piano for Esprit Contemporain 1984 has been generously provided courtesy of Remenyi House of Music.

VANISHING POINTS (1983) - John Rea

Vanishing Points is the last panel of a musical triptych which includes Hommage à Vasarely (1977) for orchestra and Treppenmusik (1982) for an ensemble of saxophones, clarinets and strings. The visual arts have been the source of inspiration for all three works.

Hommage à Vasarely, as the title suggests, attempts a musical evocation of the geometrical patterns found in the work of Victor Vasarely (1908-), whereas Treppenmusik ("staircase music") draws upon the loop-like designs and illusions of the Dutch artist, M.C. Escher (1898-1972).

Vanishing Points, while not connected to any one artist's work in particular, nevertheless alludes to the "vanishing point(s)" often found in paintings. Quick moving melodies vanish and reappear in continuous accelerandi reminiscent of the perceptual effects in art resulting from the convergence of two or more lines in order to produce the impression of perspective.

The work is dedicated to Alex Pauk, the founder and conductor of Esprit Contemporain.

JR

Born in Toronto in 1944, John Rea studied composition with John Weinzweig and Gustav Ciamaga at the University of Toronto, and with Milton Babbitt at Princeton University.

Recipient of many awards and commissions, John Rea has written music in several genres: solo, chamber, music-theatre, orchestra, ballet, opera as well as electronic music.

Besides his activities as a composer, John Rea has lectured and published articles on 20th Century music and, since 1973, has taught composition and music theory at McGill University. Rea is also a founding member of two musical societies formed in Montréal in 1978: Les événements du neuf, dedicated to the performance of contemporary works, and Traditions musicales du monde, which promotes the appreciation of non-Western music through concerts and other activities.

Mr Rea won the Jules Léger Prize for new chamber music in 1981 and was composer-in-residence at Mannheim, Germany from January to July 1984.

RITRATTO (1979-83) Magnus Lindberg

Ritratto, for 18 players, is scored for wind octet, percussion, piano and string octet. One of the most important features of the piece is the manipulation of timbral qualities to form complex surfaces of musical events.

Each section consists of a network of overlapping structures subordinated to a specific timbral constellation. These constellations are often continuations between extremities e.g. from smooth to harsh sounds (harmonic to unharmonic), dark to bright, from wooden sounds to metallic etc.

Timbre is always given priority over other parameters whose main purpose is to underline these continuations or contrasts.

The overall shape of the piece can be subdivided into four sections - diagonals, polarities, linearities and verticals. In the first part the material is shaped like a string of pearls moving across registers with different speed, shape and width. The second part groups the material in such a way as to form strong contrasts, especially concerning durational proportions whereas the third part splits the ensemble into small groups forming many juxtaposed layers of linear events. In the fourth and final part, the material tends to coagulate into dense chords with an energetic force towards synchronization.

The piece was premiered in Milano in 1983 and is dedicated to Paavo Heininen.

ML

Magnus Lindberg (b 1958) studied composition under Einojuhani Rautavaara and Paavo Heininen at the Sibelius Academy until 1981, when he took his diploma in this subject. Concurrently with his composition studies, Lindberg studied the piano under Maija Helasvuo and participated in electronic music classes given by Osmo Lindeman. Lindberg has spent much time in recent years attending various summer courses, among them those at Siena (Franco Donatoni), Darmstadt (Brian Ferneyhough) and Stockholm (the EMS electronic music studio). Since 1981, he has been working and studying in Paris, where his teachers have been Vinko Globokar and Gérard Grisey. As a pianist, Magnus Lindberg has concentrated on the performance of new music and has premiered works by a number of young composers. As part of his activities for the Korvat auki (Ears Open) society, Lindberg has realised a number of large performance projects, including works of Stockhausen, previously unperformed in Finland. Magnus Lindberg performs with the group which he himself founded, Toimii, which combines music, electronics and visual/dramatic aspects in concert.

INTO THE DISTANT STILLNESS ... 1984 Brian Cherney

Into the Distant Stillness ... was commissioned by the National Youth Orchestra with the aid of a grant from the Canada Council. The piece was written in the spring of 1984. It is the third work I have recently written which bears the word "stillness" in its title (the others being In the Stillness Between for large wind and percussion ensemble and In the Stillness of the Seventh Autumn for solo piano). In the present work I have attempted in certain sections, to suggest a sense of direction or movement towards a hushed and still landscape, mysterious and perhaps even other-worldly in essence.

The sense of movement towards something distant is to some extent reflected in the seating arrangement of the orchestra: the woodwinds are divided into two quartets, one of which is situated behind the orchestra and therefore more distant from the listener.

BC

Brian Cherney (b. 1942) studied composition in Toronto with Samuel Dolin and John Weinzweig. Since 1972 he has been on the staff of the Faculty of Music at McGill University where he teaches composition, analysis and twentieth-century history. In 1979 his String Trio tied for first place among the "recommended" works at the International Rostrum of Composers. A recent work for piano - In the Stillness of the Seventh Autumn (1983) - was especially commissioned with the aid of a grant from the Canada Council, to be the compulsory piece in the 1984 Eckhardt-Gramatté Competition, held in Brandon, Manitoba, in May.

ALCHEMIES (1983) John Burke

Alchemies continues the trend in my recent music toward a sparer sound and a more understated, allusive style. Because of this approach, the orchestral writing displays a transparency, use of solo instruments and rhythmic subtlety more typical of chamber music; and thus makes unusual demands on the players. Despite this, the basic idea of the piece is quite simple: a single chord, progressively becoming rhythmically agitated, is constantly opposed by lines and textures which display an irrepressible tendency to ascend. The resulting tension is finally resolved when the chord itself is made to rise into the highest reaches of the violin range.

JB

John Burke, born in Toronto in 1951, received degrees in composition from McGill University and the University of Michigan where he earned his doctorate. During 1978-79 he studied in Europe on a Canada Council grant and after returning to Canada taught theory and electronic music at McGill University for two years. He is the recipient of numerous awards and honours including a total of four prizes in the CBC Radio Competition for Young Composers.

MIRAGE (1984) Alex Pauk

This orchestral work is the last in a series of my pieces dealing with the intangible. It can be taken as a kind of aural terrain offering the listener a journey into three regions. The first is a medium of flux - an atmosphere in which musical elements create effects roughly parallel to optical refractions, distortions and illusions. Moments of turmoil mix with fleeting glimpses of pulsing material to produce the "air layers" of different temperatures and densities through which the reflection of light will reveal the mirage.

The mirage, an entity represented by the "suspended" music in the middle of the piece, is made up of components suggesting a phantasm from some distant, imagined and exotic culture.

In the final section, having passed by or through the apparition, we are left with traces of its essence in our memories. Its imprint carries over into the conclusion of the piece which is based on material from the opening.

AP

Though widely known as a composer, Alex Pauk (b 1944) received his formal training primarily as a conductor. After earning his Bachelor's degree at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music, he spent two years as a participant in the Ontario Arts Council's conductors' Workshop. Following this he proceeded to Tokyo where he furthered his study of conducting at the Toho Gakuen School of Music.

While he has always maintained his experience as a conductor of traditional repertoire, it is as a conductor of new music that Pauk has made his mark on the Canadian music scene. His role as founder and music director of the new music ensembles Array, Days Months and Years to Come, and more recently the orchestra Esprit Contemporain, has enabled him to promote the work of Canada's young creative musicians by conducting many premiere performances of both commissioned and non-commissioned pieces.

As a composer, Pauk has received numerous awards and commissions and has had his music performed by the Vancouver New Music Society, Toronto New Music Concerts, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, CBC Vancouver Chamber Orchestra, Canadian Electronic Ensemble, National Youth Orchestra as well as Array and Days Months and Years to Come. During the past several years he has been active as a composer of film scores and music for the theatre. Recently Pauk was a guest of the Union of Soviet Composers for performances of his music at the second International Festival of Music in Moscow.

Pauk has always maintained a special interest in the development of young musicians and has had considerable involvement with organizations such as the Vancouver Youth Orchestra, Courtenay Youth Music Centre, Vancouver Community College and, in particular, the National Youth Orchestra of Canada.

Following a year of travel and study in Europe (1978-79), under the auspices of the Canada Council, Alex Pauk moved back to his native city, Toronto, where he freelances as a composer and conductor. He is currently President of the Canadian League of Composers and co-chairman of the International Society for Contemporary Music "World Music Days".

ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN - 1984

Orchestra

FIRST VIOLINS

Anne Rapson, *Concertmistress*
Vicky Dvorak
Velma Ko
Dominique Laplante
Adele Pierre

SECOND VIOLINS

Janet Dunsworth
Fiona Huggett
Marianne Urke-Rapson
David Stewart, *Principal*
Peter Stryniak

VIOLAS

Rhyll Peel-Carter
David Harding, *Principal*
Artur Jansons
Linda Umbrico

CELLOS

Janet Kuschak
Henry van der Sloot, *Principal*
Sandra Wells

BASSES

Paul Rogers
Alan Steiner, *Principal*

FLUTES

Anne Marie Kopp
Dodie Layton, *Principal*

OBOES

Arlene Fietkau, *Principal*
Hamish Gordon

CLARINETS

Gregory James
John Rapson, *Principal*

BASSOONS

Leslie Magowan
Claire Newman, *Principal*

TRUMPETS

John Kargut, *Principal*
Gary Poole

HORNS

James Sommerville, *Principal*
Lise Vaugeois

PERCUSSION

Michael Côté

PIANO

Elizabeth Acker

STAGE MANAGER

Gregory James

LIBRARIAN

Lise Vaugeois

CREW FOR ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN

Michael Newnham
Jeremy Webster